

DEPARTMENT of the INTERIOR

FISH AND WILDLIFE SERVICE

news release
Inez Connor 202/343-5634

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PROCEDURAL CHANGES PROPOSED FOR DUCK STAMP CONTEST

The popular "Duck Stamp" contest to select a waterfowl artwork for the 1981-82 Migratory Bird Hunting and Conservation Stamp will be conducted under slightly modified rules this year if a proposal by the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service is adopted. The Interior Department agency is asking for public comment on the proposed rules, as published in the June 10 Federal Register. Comments will be accepted through July 10.

The annual competition, which earns the winner a sheet of stamps of his own design, is the only art contest regularly sponsored by the Federal Government. Last year more than 1,300 persons submitted designs for the Duck Stamp, the longest running annually issued series of stamps in U.S. revenue or postage stamp history.

To reduce the final number of entries for display and scoring to 400 or fewer, the proposed rule would allow preliminary screening by the panel of judges. In the past all entries have been displayed and scored.

The colorful \$7.50 Migratory Bird Hunting and Conservation Stamp has been issued annually since 1934 and is purchased by duck and goose hunters, conservationists, and stamp collectors. Last year's winning entry, an acrylic painting of a pair of mallards by Richard W. Plasschaert of Waseca, Minnesota, will go on sale July 1 at post offices and certain national wildlife refuges. The stamp must be carried by every migratory waterfowl hunter 16 years of age or older. Stamp revenues are used to buy migratory bird habitat under a program administered by the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service.

The proposed rule also clarifies some of the technical requirements for submitting designs, such as how the artwork should be matted. It also stresses that the artist is not to sign, initial, or identify his or her work in any way.

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Entries that are improperly submitted before the final rules take effect will be returned to the artists for resubmission.

Comments on the proposed rulemaking should be addressed to Public Affairs (AV), U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service, Washington, D.C. 20240. Final rules will be published in the Federal Register in July and will apply to this year's contest, which opens July 1 and closes at midnight, October 15.

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